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THE NAMING OF AMERICA

THE voyages of the Florentine Amerigo Vespucci belong rather to the literary than to the geographical history of the New World. An acute observer of things new and strange and a clever writer, he became, through the publication of his letters in the countries beyond the Pyrenees, the principal source of information about the western Indies. In these narratives he made himself the central personality; in not one of them did he mention the name of the commander under whom he sailed, and consequently the impression easily gained ground that he was a discoverer. His place in the history of the discoveries is the most remarkable illustration of eternal celebrity won through a happy combination of the literary gift and self-advertisement, with the coöperation of the printing-press.

Amerigo Vespucci, generally known to the English world under a Latinized form of his name, Americus Vespucius, was born in Florence March 9, 1452, where he lived until some forty years of age.¹ He entered business life, became connected with the mercantile house of the Medici, and in 1492 went to Seville, in Spain, as its foreign agent. He first appears in the Spanish documents as employed in carrying out the contracts of an Italian merchant, Berardi, engaged in equipping vessels for the government for the service to the Indies. He apparently continued in this business as a contractor till 1499,² when the vicissitudes of business life finally led him to desire something more "stable and praiseworthy". He then resolved to "see . . . the world", and availed himself of the opportunity to join an expedition of four ships which was going out to discover new lands toward the west.³

It is at this point that the first puzzle in Vespucci's career or his character is met with. He says explicitly that the expedition sailed from Cadiz May 10, 1497; but there is no record, official or unofficial, outside of his letter, of such a voyage in 1497. Further, Columbus's monopoly privileges were solemnly renewed April 23 of this year, and the earlier authorization of independent voyages was officially

¹ Luigi Hugues, in the *Raccolta Colombiana* (6 parts in 14 vols., Rome, 1892-1896), Part V, vol. 2, 115.

² *Ibid.*, 117.

³ Vespucci's letter to Soderini, C. R. Markham, *Letters of Amerigo Vespucci* (Hakluyt Society, London, 1894), 3.

revoked June 2.¹ That these formal recognitions of Columbus's privileges should be flagrantly violated by the crown while the admiral was in Spain is hardly conceivable. It is, then, the accepted conclusion of very nearly all competent scholars that Vespucci's first voyage was made in 1499 with Hojeda. We have Hojeda's own statement under oath, in the Diego Columbus suit for his privileges, that Vespucci was with him,² and we also have sworn statements that Hojeda's was the first exploration of the northern coast of South America, which was the region visited by Vespucci in his first voyage.³ Vespucci's narrative harmonizes in a number of minor details with what we know of the voyage of Hojeda.

The attempt was made by the Brazilian scholar Varnhagen, whose views are familiar to English readers from John Fiske's enthusiastic adoption of them,⁴ to show that Vespucci's voyage was really directed to the coast of Honduras and the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. In the Latin translation of the Soderini letter describing the four voyages, the first is said to have been along the coast of Parias, the region where Columbus approached the continent of South America on his third voyage in 1498; while in the original Italian the name "Lariab" is given to the region, a name not elsewhere found. This is ordinarily explained as a misprint, but Varnhagen argued that it was correct and that it meant Honduras. This conjecture he based on the statements of the historians Gomara and Oviedo, who, writing, one a generation, the other two generations later, asserted that Vicente Yañez Pinzon discovered Honduras before the fourth voyage of Columbus.⁵ The most probable year for this voyage of Pinzon Varnhagen thought to be 1497, which would harmonize then with Vespucci's narrative of an expedition in that year. But the historian Herrera states that Pinzon's voyage to Honduras was in 1506.⁶ This assertion Mr. Fiske tried to break down by characterizing it as "the single unsupported statement of Antonio de Herrera, whose great work was published in 1601". Unfortunately for this argument, Herrera copied this assertion from Las Casas, who was a contemporary and who was living in the

¹ Navarrete, *Coleccion de los Viages y Descubrimientos* (5 vols., Madrid, 1825-1837), II, 214, 219.

² *Ibid.*, III, 544; in English, in Markham, *Letters*, 30.

³ Hojeda's testimony is in note 5; see also Navarrete, III, 558, 586, 590. The testimony on 558 is in Markham, *Letters*, 109.

⁴ Varnhagen's view is also presented by Thacher, *The Continent of America* (New York, 1896), and by Gaffarel, *Histoire de la Découverte de l'Amérique* (2 vols., Paris, 1892), II, 163.

⁵ See Fiske, *Discovery of America*, II, 70.

⁶ *Historia*, dec. I, lib. vi, ch. xvii; the passage is given in Fiske, II, 66.

Indies at the time. Las Casas does not give the year, but explicitly asserts that Pinzon's voyage was undertaken when the news came of what Columbus had discovered on his fourth voyage.¹ Not less explicit is the assertion of Ferdinand Columbus that the voyage of Pinzon and Solis took place in 1508.² Still again, Peter Martyr dates the voyage the year before that of Nicuesa (1509).³

In view, then, of the restoration of Columbus's monopoly privileges, of the absence of any recorded voyage in 1497, and of the evidence that the Pinzon-Solis voyage occurred later than 1504, the conclusion is well-nigh as positive and confident as it is almost universally accepted to-day that Vespucci made no voyage in 1497 such as he ascribes to himself, and that consequently he was not the first discoverer of the mainland of South America as he appeared to be from the widely circulated Latin edition of the Soderini letter, nor of the coast of Honduras as was first suggested by Varnhagen not forty years ago.

Vespucci's first voyage, then, was made in 1499 under Hojeda. His second, so far as can be ascertained, was made immediately upon his return from the first (it being supposed that he did not tarry in Española, as did Hojeda) with Diego de Lepe in 1500, when the westward trend of the coast of South America below eight degrees south latitude was discovered.⁴ Vespucci's third voyage was made with a Portuguese captain in 1501, who was despatched to explore the lands just discovered by Cabral. This expedition ran down the coast of Brazil to the thirty-second degree parallel, then veered off through the south Atlantic until the fifty-second degree was reached, the highest southern latitude attained up to this time.⁵ After a fierce storm, land was discovered, which is identified with the island of South Georgia. Vespucci's fourth voyage in 1503 was undertaken with "the intention of discovering an island in the East called Melaccha, of which it was reported that it was very rich, and that it was the mart of all the ships that navigate the Gangetic and Indian Seas".⁶ This project of the king of Portugal was based on the reports brought back by Cabral from Calicut in 1501. It was, therefore, a renewed effort to carry out the original design of Columbus, which was not destined to be actually accomplished until the time of Magellan. The details of the history of this expedition corre-

¹ Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* (5 vols., Madrid, 1875-1876), III, 200, 201.

² *Historie*, 290 (ch. 89 in original edition).

³ *De rebus oceanicis et novo orbe*, dec. II, ch. vii (p. 181 of the edition of 1574).

⁴ Hugues, *Cronologia delle Scoperte e delle Esplorazioni Geografiche* (Milan, 1903), 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶ Markham, *Letters*, 52-53.

spond to what the historian Goes tells us of the voyage of Coelho, who went over in part the same ground as that of 1501, without however, going beyond sixteen degrees south latitude.¹

Of neither of these voyages was Vespucci the initiator, but according to his own account the first expedition on the return was intrusted to his command and in the second he was a captain. His name, however, is not to be found in the contemporary Portuguese histories nor in the vast mass of documents in the archives of Portugal relating to the discoveries.² If his two private letters to friends had not been published in Latin, instead of having the New World called after him, his name would have been known to us only as that of a map-maker and as the official examiner of pilots in Spain.³

Turning now to the products of his pen which wrought the seeming miracle, those whose authenticity is accepted consist first of a letter written to Lorenzo Piero Francesco de' Medici from Lisbon, in March or April, 1503, describing his third voyage, 1501, and a longer letter written also from Lisbon, in September, 1504, to his old school friend Pietro Soderini, of Florence, at that time gonfaloniere of the republic. This letter describes all four of the voyages. The original of the first or Medici letter is lost, but it was translated into Latin and published late in 1503 or early in 1504 under the title "*Mundus Novus*".⁴ The longer letter to Soderini was published at Florence in 1505. It dropped out of sight, and only five copies are known to be extant. A French version of it, prepared for René II, duke of Lorraine, was translated into Latin and published in 1507 as an appendix to the *Cosmographiæ Introductio* of Martin Waldseemüller, a professor of geography in the College of Saint Dié, in Lorraine.

These letters are full of details of the strange aspects of nature and of man in the new regions. They have a confidential and personal note, perhaps not unnatural in a private correspondence, which at times rises from self-importance to self-exaltation. In variety of matter they surpass Columbus's letters about his first voyage and relate of course to a different field of exploration. In considering their extraordinary popularity, it is to be remembered that Columbus's own account of his third voyage, when he discovered the mainland of South America, was not printed till the nineteenth century; nor was any description of it printed until 1504 when one appeared in the little Venetian collection of voyages entitled *Libretto de Tutta*

¹ Hugues, *Cronologia*, 12. Yet cf. Markham, *Letters*, introduction, xliii.

² Santarem, in Navarrete, III, 310; also Santarem, *Researches* (Boston, 1850), 13.

³ Cf. the documents. Navarrete, *Viages*, III, 291-309.

⁴ Quaritch, *The First Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci* (London, 1893), v.

la Navigazione de Re de Spagna de le Isole et Terreni Novamente Trovati, translated from the manuscript of Peter Martyr's unpublished *Oceani Decas*. The matter in this Libretto was taken over into the *Paesi Novamente Retrovati*, a larger collection published in 1507, and Peter Martyr published his *Oceani Decas* (Decade of the Ocean) in 1511.

If it is now remembered that Vespucci dated his first voyage 1497, and that his account of it was presented to the Latin-reading world in 1507, while Peter Martyr's brief account of Columbus's voyage of 1498 did not get before the Latin-reading world till 1508, in the Latin translation of the *Paesi Novamente Retrovati*, it is perfectly clear why the fame of Vespucci as the discoverer of continental South America eclipsed that of Columbus. Nor must it be forgotten that the Latin translation of the Medici letter descriptive of equatorial South America was being read all over Europe from 1503 on, for it is to this narrative more than to the other that the greatness of Vespucci's reputation was owing. An enumeration of the number of editions which were published within the next few years will illustrate this fact. There appeared in rapid succession fifteen editions of the Latin translation, seven editions in German, and one in Flemish.¹ Down to 1550 forty editions of this Medici letter have been recorded.² Less numerous were the Latin editions of the Soderini letter describing all four voyages, yet as they were appended to small treatises or text-books on geography their influence on the rising generation was most marked.

Outside of Spain Vespucci decidedly eclipsed Columbus. In the peninsula the case was different. The people among whom he lived and on whose ships he sailed knew little or nothing of him. No Portuguese translation of his letters was published until 1812 and no Spanish one until 1829. Peter Martyr just mentions his Brazilian voyages; Oviedo knows him not. Las Casas regards him as an impostor and his view is echoed by Herrera. Hardly less severe are the moderns Muñoz and Navarrete. In Portugal, Goes, Barros, and Osorio pass him in silence, and in the nineteenth century Santarem devoted a book to exposing his pretensions.

The enormous circulation of the Medici letter under the title *Novus Mundus*, etc., familiarized the European public outside of Spain with the association of Vespucci's name with the New World. Impressive, too, was his apparently clear conviction that it was a new part of the world and not simply the East Indies that had been

¹ See Fumagalli's bibliography in Uzielli's edition of Bandini, *Vita di Amerigo Vespucci* (Florence, 1898).

² Hugues, in *Raccolta Colombiana*, Part V, vol. 2, 139.

found. In the very first lines he says the regions which "we found and which may be called a new world (*novus mundus*), since our ancestors had no knowledge of them, and the matter is most novel to all who hear of it. For it goes beyond the ideas of our ancients, most of whom said there was no continent below the equator and toward the south, or if any of them said there was one they declared it must be uninhabited for many reasons. But that this opinion is false and altogether contrary to the truth this last voyage of mine has made clear."¹ Here was a positive, clean-cut declaration of the most striking character, very different from Columbus's enthusiastic but not altogether convincing identifications in his first letter of Cipango and Cathay.

Yet that it was really in any sense original with Vespucci may be questioned. In the first place, the Portuguese had proved, thirty odd years earlier, that equatorial Africa was both habitable and inhabited.² Secondly, the letter of Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabella, describing his third voyage, on which he discovered the mainland of South America, was shown to Hojeda and inspired his voyage of 1499,³ on which he was accompanied by Vespucci. That Vespucci was also familiar with the contents of the letter is altogether probable, particularly if he went on the voyage, as is supposed, as a government agent. In this letter Columbus said of the mainland: "Of this half part [of the world] Ptolemy had no knowledge"⁴; "if this river does not flow from the earthly paradise it comes and flows from a boundless land to the south of which hitherto there has been no knowledge"⁵; "now when your highnesses have here [*i. e.*, across the Atlantic] another world (*otro mundo*)". In the letter to the nurse of Prince Juan, Columbus wrote of his third voyage: "I undertook a new voyage to the new heaven and new world (*nuevo cielo é mundo*), which up to that time was concealed"⁷; and again, "where by the divine will I have put under the dominion of the king and queen, our lords, another world".⁸

¹ Varnhagen, *Amerigo Vespucci* (Lima, 1865), 13; Markham, *Letters*, 42.

² Opposite d'Ailly's assertion in his *Imago Mundi* that the torrid zone "is uninhabitable on account of excessive heat", Columbus had written in the margin at least a dozen years before: "It is not uninhabitable, because the Portuguese sail through it nowadays, and it is, indeed, very thickly inhabited; and under the equator is the king of Portugal's Castle of Mine, which we have seen." *Raccolta Colombiana*, Part II, vol. 2, 375.

³ *Supra*, p. 42.

⁴ R. H. Major, *Select Letters of Columbus* (2d ed., London, Hakluyt Society, 1870), 136.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

Further indication that this use of the name Novus Mundus did not originate with Vespucci is afforded by one of the sketch-maps prepared by Bartholomew Columbus in 1503, when on the fourth voyage, in which the land south of the Mar de Caribi is called "Mondo Novo".¹

Some additional illustrations of the use and meaning of the terms "new world", "other world", "West Indies" may be given here in order to clear away in some measure the confusion in which the subject has been involved.² The name West Indies was originated by Columbus himself and was used by him for the first time in document xliii, article iv, of his *Book of Privileges*, written before 1502, in which he refers to "la calidad de las dichas Yndias occidentales a todo el mundo innotas" ("the character of the said West Indies unknown to all the world").³

As for the term New World, in one or another of its Latin equivalents it was used from the beginning by Peter Martyr to describe Columbus's discoveries. In reality it did not mean a region detached at all points from the hitherto known world, but a new part of the globe not hitherto within the range of European knowledge. The use of it, therefore, implies of necessity nothing as to the physical connection or disconnection with Asia, but simply the fact of situation outside the bounds of previous knowledge, just as we say figuratively of a man in unfamiliar surroundings, "he found himself in a new world". Thus the Venetian Cada Mosto, writing of his voyages down the hitherto unexplored coast of Africa in 1455 and 1456, says the regions he saw in comparison with Europe might well be called "un altro Mondo" ("another world").⁴ Similarly, after the name had become familiar as applied to South America, Francis Serrão, in writing to Magellan of the Moluccas, refers to them as farther than the antipodes and as being "another new world" ("outro novo mundo").⁵

Peter Martyr uses the phrase "western antipodes" in his letter of May 14, 1493; "new hemisphere of the earth" in that of September 13, 1493; he calls Columbus "that discoverer of new world" ("ille novi orbis repertor") November 1, 1493; he writes of more wonders from the "New World" ("orbe novo") October 20, 1494;

¹ Carlo Errera, *L'epoca della grandi scoperte geografiche* (Milan, 1902), 297. This map is reproduced in Channing, *Students' History of the United States* (New York, 1898), 32.

² E. g., in Fiske, *Discovery of America*, I, 444, note, and 515; II, *passim*.

³ Spotorno, *Codice Diplomatico Colombo-Americano* (Genoa, 1823), 286; *Memorials of Columbus*, (London, 1823), 215; Thacher, *Columbus*, II, 530.

⁴ Humboldt, *Kritische Untersuchungen* (3 vols., Berlin, 1836-1852), III, 130, note.

⁵ Barros, *Da Asia* (24 vols., Lisbon, 1778-1788), dec. III, liv. v, ch. viii.

and in December of the same year he uses the phrase "Western Hemisphere" ("ab occidente hemisperio").¹ The Florentine Simone del Verde, in January, 1499, in a letter from Cadiz, remarks that the admiral had had great courage and genius in having discovered the other world opposite our own ("l'altro mondo opposto al nostro").² That Vespucci's letters first gave wide publicity to the discovery of a continental region south of the West Indies islands is undeniable, but that he was the first to recognize this discovery as such is not true. In fact, his conviction may have been simply the fruit of the seed planted by Columbus.

That Columbus believed at the same time that he had found islands lying off the eastern coast of Asia, and also a mainland to the south of these islands unknown to the ancients, presents no difficulty, but rather offers a solution of old-standing perplexities. Many writers have insisted that Columbus died in ignorance of his real achievement, believing that he had discovered the islands off the coast of Asia and part of the mainland of that continent. Others with equal confidence maintain that he realized that he had discovered a new world. His own language supports both views, and his position and that of his contemporaries becomes intelligible enough in the light of the interpretation given above of the phrase "new world", if we once realize the striking analogy between the relation of Australia to the Malay peninsula and that of South America to the parts of North America that Columbus visited. To take an illustration from a map published after Columbus's death and after the publication of Vespucci's voyages, in Ruysch's map in the *Ptolemy* of 1508 Florida occupies the position of Borneo, Española that of New Guinea, and Mundus Novus that of Australia.³ In other words, if America and the Pacific had not existed and Columbus had done just exactly what he supposed he did, he would have discovered Borneo, New Guinea, and Australia, and these regions would have been called "another world", and Australia, *par excellence*, "Mundus Novus". It was only after Magellan's voyage across the Pacific that antagonism appears between Columbus's different descriptions. He did not and could not, nor could any one else, divine that vast expanse of waters.

Returning now to the history of the narrative of Vespucci's voy-

¹ All these will be found in Thacher's extracts from Peter Martyr, *Opus Epistolarum*, in his *Christopher Columbus*, I, 53 ff.

² Harrisse, *Christophe Colomb* (2 vols., Paris, 1884-1885), II, 97; Thacher, I, 63.

³ Sketches of Ruysch's map are given in Fiske, II, 114; Winsor, *Columbus*, 532, and *Narrative and Critical History*, II, 115. A comparison by means of any Mercator projection will make clear the points made in the text.

ages, with its widely-published announcement of a hitherto unknown southern continental region, we come to the first suggestion to attach the Florentine's name to this "Mundus Novus". Martin Waldseemüller, the young professor of geography at the college in Saint Dié, who published the Soderini letter or narrative of the four voyages as an appendix to his *Cosmographiæ Introductio*, 1507, when he enumerated the different parts of the world, wrote: "In sexto climate Antarcticum versus, et pars extrema Africæ nuper reperta, et Zamzibar, Java minor et Seula insulæ, et quarta orbis pars (quam quia Americus invenit Amerigen, quasi Americi terram, sive Americam nuncupare licet) sitæ sunt." ("In the sixth climate toward the south pole are situated both the farthest part of Africa recently discovered, and Zanzibar, the islands of lesser Java and Ceylon, and the fourth part of the globe which since Americus discovered it may be called Amerige—i. e., Americ's land or America.")¹

A little further on, when ready to take up the parts of the world unknown to the ancients, he opens his account: "Nunc vero et hæ partes sunt latius lustratæ et alia quarta pars per Americum Vesputium (ut in sequentibus audietur) inventa est, quam non video cur quis jure vetet ab Americo inventore, sagacis ingenii viro Amerigen quasi Americi terram, sive Americam dicendam: cum et Europa et Asia a mulieribus sua sortita sint nomina." ("Now, indeed, as these regions are more widely explored, and another fourth part has been discovered by Americus Vesputius, as may be learned from the following letters, I do not see why any one may justly forbid it to be named Amerige—that is, Americ's Land, from Americus, the discoverer, a man of sagacious mind, or America, since both Europe and Asia derived their names from women.")²

It will be noted that this young scholar, who in the prevailing fashion of the Renaissance had dignified his cumbrous family name of Waldseemüller into the Greco-Latin compound Hylacomylus (Gr. ὕλη, a wood; Lat. *lacus*, lake; Gr. μύλος, mill), which effectually concealed his identity in later days until it was revealed by Humboldt, pursued a similar process in devising the first of the two names which he proposed for the New World. Amerige is made up of Ameri(ci) and *ge*, the Greek γῆ, land. As an alternative the feminine of Americus is suggested by analogy with Asia, Europa, and Africa. As between Amerige and America euphony soon gave the palm to America, and only a writer here and there adopted the

¹ Fol. 3b., cited from Kretschmer, *Die Entdeckung Amerika's* (Berlin, 1892), 364.

² Fol. 15b., cited from Kretschmer, 364.

former.¹ The same advantage and the apt analogy in form to Asia and Africa, effectively and indispensably seconded by the rapid multiplication of geographies and maps in Germany, soon gave America the lead over all its 'competitors, in spite of the recurring sense of the injustice done to the memory of Columbus.

From the time of Schöner, who first made the charge in his *Opusculum Geographicum*, 1533, to the time of Humboldt, who completely refuted it, the belief was not uncommon that Vespucci had a hand in giving his own name to the New World. An interesting side-light on this point is thrown by the fact that his nephew Giovanni Vespucci did not adopt the name in the map he made in 1523.² Waldseemüller himself, when he became more thoroughly acquainted with the real history of the first discoveries, quietly dropped the name, and on his map of 1513 substituted for it on the mainland of South America "Terra Incognita", with the inscription, "This land, with the adjacent islands, was discovered by Columbus, a Genoese, under the authority of the King of Castile."³

The name America, notwithstanding the activity of the German press, made little or no headway in the Spanish peninsula, where "The Indies" was the prevalent official name and the one used by historians like Oviedo, Las Casas, and Herrera. The first Spanish maps to contain the name America were those in the *Atlas* of Lopez, Madrid, 1758.⁴ Muñoz, in 1793, entitled his work, which was the first really critical history according to modern ideas, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*. Among the other names suggested some may be noted. "Atlantis" was proposed by the French geographer Postel, 1561, and his example was followed among others by Sanson, 1689.⁵ Ortelius (Oertel), in 1571, desiring to do equal honor to Columbus and Vespucci, proposed to call North America "Columbana" and the southern continent "America". On Mercator's globe of 1541 the

¹ E. g., Nicolini de Sabio, in his edition of the *Cosmographia Introductio* (Venice, 1535); Marcou, *Nouvelles Recherches* (Paris, 1888), 44. The true derivation of the name *Amerige* was first explicitly given by the present writer in the *Political Science Quarterly* for March, 1893 (VIII, 166). Schöner did not recognize it, for he takes the accusative case *Amerigem* for the name, *Luculentissima Descriptio*, 1515, c. xi, fol. 60. Curiously enough, even Kretschmer does the same in his *Entdeckung Amerika's*, 364. Marcou thought it a variant of Amerigo, *Nouvelles Recherches*, 44. *Amerigem* is also found in Stobnicza's *Introductio in Ptholomei Cosmographiam* (Cracow, 1512, Fumagalli's bibliography, No. 46, in Uzielli's edition of Bandini, *Vita*). America, too, puzzled some writers, being taken for an adjective, so that the full name would be *America Terra*. Letter of Aucuparius to Frisius (Fumagalli, No. 64), or *America Provincia*, as Apian's map of 1520 (Kretschmer, 366; Hugues, *Le Vicende del Nome "America"* (Turin, 1898), 26.

² Hugues, *ibid.*, 29.

³ *Ibid.*, 18. See *Atlas zu Kretschmer, Entdeckung Amerika's*, plate 12.

⁴ Hugues, *op. cit.*, 43.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

name America is stretched over the hemisphere, "Ame" being inscribed on the northern and "rica" on the southern continent. The names North America and South America first appear on the maps early in the seventeenth century, in Magini's *Ptolemy* and Hondius's *Atlas*, 1609.¹

The first indignant protest against the injustice done to Columbus in the application of another's name to the New World which he discovered was that of the celebrated Michael Servetus in that edition of *Ptolemy* (1535) whose unfortunate disagreement with the books of Moses as to the fertility of Palestine was one of the charges the stern Calvin brought against his victim.² Servetus declared that those were entirely mistaken who claimed that this continent should be called America, for Americus went thither much later than Columbus.³ The case was taken up vigorously by Las Casas, who, as a friend and admirer of the admiral, felt deeply on the subject.⁴ Curiously enough, there is no reference to the matter in Ferdinand Columbus's life of his father, which was written before 1539, and probably after the protest of Servetus. It would seem as if he died in ignorance of the eclipse of his father's fame by that of Vespucci in Europe outside of Spain.

The four discoverers—Columbus, John and Sebastian Cabot, and Amerigo Vespucci—have fared variously at the hands of modern historical criticism. John Cabot has been raised from almost complete obscurity to become a conspicuous but still shadowy figure. Sebastian Cabot has been pulled down from the lofty pedestal which he apparently erected for himself, his veracity is impugned, his scientific attainments disputed, and his lack of filial piety exposed to a glaring light. Around Vespucci the storms of controversy have raged for three centuries and a half, and he has suffered from them like Sebastian Cabot. His claims for himself have not stood the test. While he has been cleared of complicity in having his name attached to the New World, it is generally accepted that he antedated his first voyage to secure a distinction which did not belong to him and that his narratives unduly exalt himself at the expense of others equally entitled to honor. The position of Columbus alone has not been materially affected by the modern scrutiny into his career. Opinion has differed about his character, but the record of his achievements has been unshaken and the estimate of its significance has risen rather than fallen.

EDWARD GAYLORD BOURNE.

¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

² Humboldt, *Kritische Untersuchungen*, II, 323.

³ The passage is quoted in Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History*, II, 176, note 10.

⁴ Las Casas's extensive criticism of Vespucci's narratives is given in English in Markham, *Letters*, 68-108.